extended
The magazine of the OS/2 community
attributes

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In this issue

2000

Wishing you a Happy and Prosperous New Year
from all of us at the Phoenix OS/2 Society

Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc

The Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc (POSSI) is an international organization of computer users with an interest in IBM's OS/2 operating system and related issues.

Letters

Making GCP run with WINPROXY

I have a mini IP network sharing a cable modem Internet connection. The cable modem is connected to a computer running Windows NT Server and a proxy server.

With a conventional proxy server, the client applications must be set up to run with a proxy, so I was not able to use Golden Commpass with my high speed Internet connection.

However, I recently found a proxy server to obtain a transparent proxy. WINPROXY, by Ostis Software, uses a combination of NAT and a proxy server. Most applications do not have to be set up for a proxy to run with WINPROXY.

Golden Commpass runs fine with the standard settings: `telephone number="gateway.compuserve.com"`, and `port="tcpip"`.

WINPROXY is very well documented, and provides for the various access restrictions that one can only get with a firewall or proxy. I recommend it to anyone needing a proxy server for Windows.

Neil Feinstein

Post Road Mailer workaround

I read "The Software Orphanage" in this month's issue of extended attributes. It sure sounds like a good idea. I vote yes.

If you know anyone contemplating using recent Fix-Packs with Innoval's Post Road Mailer, beware. It puts non-standard EAs in files and directories that cause major problems. Without the help of Unimaint and Jim Read, the situation would have been sticky. In the process, I started using the beta of the new FileStar that Jim is developing. It has has so many excellent features that it boggles the mind.

George Zipfel

Huzzah for user groups

I cannot emphasize strongly enough how valuable a resource a functioning user group is. See if there's one near you, within any reasonable driving distance. The "local" one for OS/2 in southern California, (Southern California OS/2 User Group, www.scoug.com) is a 75 minute freeway drive from me. But the time, distance, and negligible cost has been worth the drive 5,000 times over. The user group has saved my neck on more than a few occasions.

SCOUG has quite a few extremely knowledgeable computer people, well versed in hardware and software. The group has a Help Desk (special meeting apart from the regular meeting, usually monthly), and regular special interest groups (SIGs), where you can bring in your system, and someone who probably knows the answers can troubleshoot or assist in installing things. SCOUG has Internet access at the Help Desk, in case they have to pull something off the Web. (One of the guys travels with a pack of 50 CDs, so he's already loaded for bear.)

Hopefully, there's something along these lines available not too far from you.

This kind of resource becomes extra important because OS/2 has—in effect—been driven underground. On more occasions than you would expect, the thing you need exists (a driver, or a good substitute device), but is essentially unpublicized. Your chances of knowing about it or finding it yourself aren't good. I read Warpcast (www.warpcast.org), check the OS/2 sections on Compuserve (GO IBMFORUM) and in the newgroups when I can, and subscribe to extended attributes and some online newsletters. But, even then, I still learn of new things available for OS/2 that I never heard of, thanks to other members of the local user group.

Jordan Fox

Mr Bunny's Big Cup O' Java

by Marilyn Pizzo

From the illustration on the front cover to the statements on the book's back cover, Mr Bunny's Big Cup O' Java (MBBCOJ) is witty and down-right silly at times but puts a different twist on explaining some Java terms. Actually, it states that this book provides "no information whatsoever."

I'm far from an authority on Java, but I did learn some technology and was able to pick out the programming stuff. The story line was much more entertaining but the way the technical information is inserted is clever. You almost don't realize you just learned something.

MBBCOJ is for the curious, those who need some humor in their lives, and those who need to get a life—especially if you already speak Java. When you indulge in Mr. Bunny's and Farmer Jake's escapades, be sure to read every page starting with ii and including the covers. You will laugh out loud at least somewhere during the course of the book. ⓦ

Mr. Bunny's Big Cup O' Java
$24.95

by Carlton Egremont III

www.mrbunny.com

INF at your fingertips

by Esther Schindler

If you look inside the Information Folder on your desktop, you'll find a collection of icons that look like books: "Performance Considerations," "Command Reference," and "REXX Information." These books, sometimes called INF files (because the file names end in .INF... hey, did you expect a more subversive or elegant reason?), are OS/2's standard way of providing Help and other information.

To use an INF file, you can double click on the icon. Or, from the command line, type VIEW COCOA.INF. If your CONFIG.SYS contains a BOOKSHELF environment variable (it probably does), you can use the syntax VIEW /chocolate to search all books in the BOOKSHELF path for the specified topic. Only the first occurrence of the topic is displayed, however, so this isn't quite as clever an option as you might imagine.

So, what good are these things?

Although IBM supplies a lot of data in HTML files, these days, OS/2 provides most of its own help information in these INF "books." They can be used as a tutorial to learn a software program, reference information, or help information for assistance with a program. Many OS/2 applications, particularly older ones, provide their help files in these online books. Some supply the product manual only as an INF file, which is good for saving trees but lousy for reading in bed.

If you are used to Windows' help files, you won't find many surprises when you use OS/2 INF files. You can skip from one section to another by pressing Enter or by double-clicking on highlighted text, and you can view the file from various perspectives: using an index, or a table of contents. There's not much to thrill you, here.

However, one feature that's often ignored is the ability to search an OS/2 INF file for specific text. That's especially valuable when the help file isn't well organized. (Gee, we've never seen that happen, now have we?) You can search just an individual section or, more likely, the entire document. Just click on Search and type in the text you're looking for (say, REXX), choose where the system should search for the text, and press OK. You'll be presented with a list of pages that include your chosen phrase.

If you work with a given collection of books often, you can create a virtual book that's composed of several INF files. In your CONFIG.SYS, add a line like
SET CHOCOLATE=COCOA+FUDGE

This assumes, of course, that you have INF files in your BOOKSHELF path named COCOA.INF and FUDGE.INF. If so, when you VIEW CHOCOLATE you are presented with one book that shares one index and one table of contents.
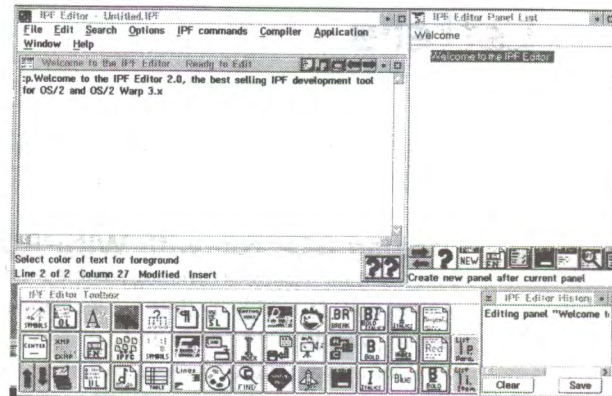
Creating INF files

While the primary use of these books is to provide technical information for OS/2 and for OS/2 applications, there's no reason not to use them for other purposes. Since INF files can contain text, fonts, graphics, sound, and bitmaps, they're useful for disseminating all kinds of stuff. For instance, the Team OS/2 newsletter was provided in INF format, as was the OS/2 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) list. Some user groups provided their newsletter this way. Or, for the less technically inclined, you can download homebrew beer recipes, in INF format, from ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/info/catsmeow.zip or read Shakespeare's Sonnets (ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/info/sonnet.zip).

Interested in creating INF files yourself? To do so, you create ASCII files and then "tag" them to create IPF (information presentation facility) files. Like other tagging languages, from TeX to HTML, this can be done simply or elaborately. The IPF (Information Presentation Facility) tagging language provides the instructions for how online information is to be displayed. With these instructions, or tags, you can highlight text, set margins, add lists, notes, and notices, create tables, change the size, style (font), and color of displayed information, illustrate with examples, figures, and art, define ways to connect information units, and establish communication links to other applications. Cool stuff, huh?

Once you create the IPF file, you compile it using the IPFC (IPF Compiler), which—for unfathomable reasons—is only available in OS/2 developer kits, on the OS/2 Developer Connection CD, or included with some OS/2 development environments. (It was part of Borland C++ for OS/2, IBM C Set ++/2 and First Step, and CA-Realizer, so this might be a good reason to pick up one of these older packages on a discount rack).

In any case, if you want to explore the process of creating INF files, you may want to contact IBM's Publications (800-879-2755 or www.redbooks.ibm.com) to purchase a copy of Red Book G25H-7110-00, *OS/2 Warp Version 3 Information Presentation Facility Programming Guide*. I'm not sure if it's still available, but it should cost under forty dollars.

Happy reading! ☺

More INFormation

Along with a wealth of material published in the INF format, several utilities have been published, over the years, to help you use, create, or manage these online books. I searched the Internet to find a few that seemed most useful, which may save you a bit of time.

While several of these tools are relatively old—many have a 1995 date—most of them should work at least adequately. I haven't used any of these programs, however, so I don't mean to offer qualitative judgements.

There is no particular standard place for an application to put its INF files; you'll usually find them in the same directory as the rest of the program. MakeBook 2.1 (`ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/dev/rexx/mkbko021.zip`), a $10 shareware utility, creates a folder on your desktop containing all the INF files on your system. It searches local and network drives for INF files and create icons for them on your desktop. ALLINF (`ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/util/wps/allinf.zip`) seems similar, promising to create a folder containing all .INF files on system. I'll let you determine which is better for your needs.

On CompuServe's new-and-improved IBM Forum (GO IBMFORUM) you'll find `GETINF.ZIP`, a 1993 program (shareware, $10) that makes it easy for OS/2 users to catalog and view INF files. GetInfs builds a catalog of INF files and allows you to quickly view any file. Also, check out Infidx (`ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/util/misc/infidx13.zip`), which dynamically creates INF-file objects.

You'll find several viewers for INF files, from Infview (`ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/util/browser/view01.zip`) to vipf (`ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/util/browser/vipf.zip`) to ViewAll/2 (`ftp://hobbes.nmsu .edu/pub/os2/util/system/viewall.zip`).

What if you want to create INF files? One tool that appears useful for building such files is ViperHelp, (`http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mek/vyper.htm`). VyperHelp is a visual outliner and editor for creating online help for OS/2-based systems. It generates IPF files, which can be compiled into OS/2-based HLP and INF files. It also generates WinHelp project source, including HPJ, CNT, RTF and HH files.

With HyperMake (which you may have encountered earlier as MakeIPF), you can create HTML files or IBM IPF files, Winhelp and Microsoft HTML-Help files. Instead of editing HTML, IPF or RTF files directly, you enter simple ASCII source text. Links are created automatically. Windows at different headings levels can be shown simultaneously (frames) with only one command. At the end of a chapter, links to subchapters are created automatically. HyperMake is at `http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/vrb/SWEHMAKE.HTM`.

I also have a copy of IPF Editor, from Perez Computing Services (`www.pcs-soft.com`), "the intelligent IPF editing tool," which is practically a visual development environment for help files. I've been intending to review it for years, and with a 1996 date on the manual I suppose I should admit that I'm somewhat behind.

Other related utilities are PCS IPF Editor ("create/edit INF/HLP online help") at `ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/apps/editors/ipfe10.zip`, INF_HTML at `ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/apps/internet/www/server/infhtm9b.zip` (which lets you display .INF files on Web servers), and HTML2IPF at `ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/apps/internet/www/util/html2ipf-0.1.1.zip`, which says it will convert HTML pages to IPF format (for INF creation). ⊙

Back Again/2000

by Joe Hansen

I've used CDS's BackAgain/2 (BA/2) backup utility since 1994. BA/2 has saved me from big trouble numerous times, including one bad night when, thinking I was in a subdirectory when I was actually in my root directory, I deleted most of the operating system from my computer.

I have been impressed by BA/2's publisher, CDS Inc, too; they periodically offer free patches to fix problems and make minor improvements. Their technical support, by email and telephone, has also been very good. They've helped me long after I purchased BA/2, though the fine print says Tech Support is free only for the first 30 days.

When I saw that CDS had released an upgraded version, BackAgain/2000 (BA/2K), I immediately the evaluation edition, and registered it so that I could test with large backups. After a few days' trial, I ordered BA/2K Workstation; it arrived as a single CD in a few days.

The purchased edition wouldn't install properly until I uninstalled the evaluation edition. You can keep your old BA/2, though, as long as it's in a different subdirectory.

BA/2K does not have a printed manual, but full documentation is in an Adobe Acrobat PDF file on the CD, and a copy of the Acrobat reader is included. I printed out the 71 pages, which are generally clear and complete, with a helpful glossary. Though there's no index, it's fairly easy to find specific topics by referring to the table of contents. On-line help is available too.

So what's new?

BA/2K has an impressive number of improved features. It offers a simplified "Hot Start" wizard that walks you through setting up a backup or restore. The selective process and command line backups, both familiar to BA/2 users, are still there. Pattern lists, for example, let you avoid backing up any "*.TMP" files, regardless of their location.

Hot Start makes disaster recovery under BA/2K much easier than with BA/2, where only the (relatively complicated) command line restore was available from recovery diskettes. To prepare for disaster, you need system utility disks, made either with OS/2's own utility or with BOOTOS2. A BA/2K utility then adds files to two of the diskettes, and records its own programs and files on an additional disk. OS/2 numbers its system utility disks as 0 through 3, but BA/2K refers to these same disks as 1 through 4. This is confusing, but you only need to deal with it once. If you ever have to recover the system, boot from diskettes, and Hot Start walks you through the rest of the process.

> **Back Again/2000**
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> CDS, Inc
> 651-730-4161
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> www.cds-inc.com
> (also at www.indelible-blue.com)

Device support

CDS claims enhanced support of backup devices, including almost every known ATAPI/IDE and SCSI tape drive. BA/2 worked perfectly with my Conner CTT8000-A drive, and BA/2K does too. BA/2K can read files from tapes (but not from disks) made by BA/2, but to do a backup on a tape that contains BA/2 files, BA/2K will require permission to erase the tape and assign a new volume label. CDS says that BA/2K tapes are compatible with BA/2K files created under Windows 95/98/NT, making this a useful utility for transferring files between systems.

BA/2K is fully multi-threaded, and it is definitely more efficient than BA/2. It scans drives somewhat faster than BA/2; in my tests of a multi-partition backup involving 26,000 files, totalling about 1.7GB, BA/2K was 12% faster. Also, BA/2K uses much less space for its own library files. Apparently, when the user selects "erase tape" when doing a backup, BA/2K finds and deletes the now-obsolete library file associated with the volume being erased.

BA/2K features a new backup scheduler that doesn't require BA/2K to be running. Installation puts the scheduler into your startup folder, where it runs in the background until it's time for a backup. BA/2K also includes a REXX function library for scripting.

The cost to upgrade from BA/2 to BA/2K workstation edition is $49. Competitive upgrade and non-upgrade prices are $79 and $99. (For the server edition, which I did not test, the comparable prices are $99, $149, and $199.) It's well worth the price, and you'll be giving a vote of confidence to an ISV that supports OS/2. ☉

Joe Hansen is president of Lexington Strategic Associates, a management consulting firm in Lexington, Massachussets. After receiving a graduate degree from Harvard in 1958, he began his computing career as a programmer on an IBM CPC (Card Programmed Computer), a vacuum tube and relay machine with two card readers, a card punch, a printer and zero memory (it did have some 16 bit registers). His company uses OS/2 exclusively, he writes, "because we prefer to spend our time on client projects rather than trying to get the computers working."

Verisign Certificate Expiration

Important security alert

from IBM

Netscape Communicator 4.05 or earlier include a root certificate set to expire on December 31, 1999. Users of these browsers will experience an additional dialog box when connecting to secure sites after January 1, 2000. This is a user interface issue; root CA certificate expiration does not affect SSL encryption. Users may safely click on continue and proceed with secure transactions.

To eliminate this additional dialog box, you must upgrade your browser or delete and obtain a new root CA certificate.

This applies to Netscape Navigator 2.02 for OS/2 and to Netscape Communicator 4.04 for OS/2 Warp. Netscape Communicator 4.61 for OS/2 Warp has an updated root CA certificate and needs no action.

For more information, see www.ibm.com/software/os/warp/netscape or click on Release Notes under Help on your browser. ◔

Teaching the horse to sing

A multimedia class for Object Rexx

by Bill Schindler

Sometimes you want to do more in REXX than just beep the speaker or draw text on the screen. You might like to play a tune or even a movie. But playing a multimedia file may seem like a huge leap for a command line REXX program.

In reality, it's actually not a very big leap.

If you dig through the multimedia folders, you'll find a "Multimedia with REXX" INF file that documents the REXX interface into OS/2's multimedia. There's even a REXX program, PLAY.CMD, that you can look at and use. Unfortunately, both the documentation and the contents of PLAY.CMD may leave you convinced that using multimedia with REXX is a complicated endeavour. You have to keep track of several pieces of information, and you have to use some rather strange looking function calls.

What you really want is to just tell REXX to "play this WAV file" and have it play.

Object Rexx to the rescue!

The way to hide the complexitity is to put it inside of an Object Rexx class. That way, the class can manage the complexities and present a simple interface to any program that needs to use multimedia. Hiding the complexity in a class also means that you don't have to relearn the multimedia system each time you want to play a WAV file or a movie.

The only downside is that if you aren't using Object Rexx, you're going to have to switch. (Hint: Run SWITCHRX from the command line.)

Here's an example of using the multimedia class to play the sound file "applause.wav":

```
/* A multimedia example */
mm = .multimedia~new("c:\mmos2\sounds\applause.wav")
mm~play
EXIT
::requires "mmos2.rxx"
```

If you're not used to looking at Object Rexx code, here's what's happening:

- The program creates an instance of the multimedia class by sending the new message. (The "twiddle" (~) is an operator used for sending messages to objects.) The new message causes the multimedia class to create a new object and initialize it with the name of the file we want to play. The object is stored in the mm variable.
- The play message is sent to the mm object. In response to this message, the object plays the multimedia file that it was initialized with.
- The ::requires instruction tells Object Rexx to load the code stored separately in the mmos2.rxx file. (That's where our multimedia class is defined.)

Near the end of the code listing, you'll see a "::method play" defined. That method implements the play message. In other words, it gets called (like a subroutine) when you send the play message to a multimedia object.

The new message is implemented by the init method. There's two init methods in multimedia: a CLASS method and a "normal" method. The CLASS method is called once by Object Rexx when the class file is loaded. The normal init method is called when you send the class a new message (i.e. create a new object).

Final notes

Once you've created mmos2.rxx, store it in a directory that's on the PATH. Otherwise, you'll have to use a full pathname in the ::requires statement.

Since the multimedia class relies on OS/2's built-in multimedia support, a program using the class can play any type of file that OS/2's multimedia recognizes. That includes WAV, MPEG, MIDI, and movies.

Try it out and let me know if you find any cool uses or extensions for the class. ☺

```
/*----------------------------------------------------
 * mmos2.rxx: An OS/2 Multimedia class for Object Rexx
 *
 * Author: Bill Schindler
 */

::class multimedia PUBLIC

/*----------------------------------------------------
 * Class static initialization
 */
::method init CLASS
  EXPOSE aliasVal
```

```
  aliasVal = 0
  /* Load the DLL, initialize MCI REXX support */
  IF RxFuncQuery('mciRxInit') THEN
    DO
    IF RxFuncAdd('mciRxInit', 'MCIAPI', 'mciRxInit') THEN
      DO
      NOP
      END
    ELSE
      DO
      CALL mciRxInit
      END
    END
```

```
/*-------------------------------------------------------
 * Class static method to allow multiple multimedia
 * instances to exist in the same program. (Creates a
 * unique name to be used as an MMOS2 alias.)
 *
 */
::method newAlias CLASS
  EXPOSE aliasVal
  aliasVal = aliasVal + 1
  RETURN 'rx' || aliasVal~right(5, '0')

/*-------------------------------------------------------
 * Object instance initialization
 *
 * Takes a filename as an initializing parameter
 */
::method init
  EXPOSE isOpen filename theState alias
  USE ARG filename
  theState = 'NOTREADY'
  isOpen = .false
  alias = .multimedia~newAlias

/*-------------------------------------------------------
 * Object instance cleanup
 */
::method uninit
  EXPOSE isOpen
  IF isOpen THEN
    self~close
  CALL mciRxExit

/*-------------------------------------------------------
 * Open the multimedia file
 */
::method open
  EXPOSE isOpen filename theState deviceId alias

  IF isOpen THEN
    RETURN 'READY:'
  cmd = 'open' filename 'alias' alias 'wait'
  macRC = mciRxSendString(cmd, 'retSt', 0, 0)
  IF macRC = 0 THEN
    DO
      macRC = mciRxSendString( ,
                "capability" alias "device type wait", ,
                'retSt', 0, 0)
      IF macRC <> 0 THEN
        DO
          CALL mciRxSendString "close" alias "wait", ,
                          'retSt', 0, 0
        END
      ELSE IF retSt~translate = 'WAVEAUDIO' THEN
        DO
          retSt = 0
          macRC = mciRxSendString( ,
                    "status" alias "length wait", ,
                    'retSt', 0, 0)
```

```
            IF retSt = 0 THEN
              DO
                CALL mciRxSendString 'close' alias 'wait', ,
                                'retSt', 0, 0
                macRC = 70555   /* File not found */
              END
          END
      IF macRC <> 0 THEN
        DO
          CALL mciRxGetErrorString macRC, 'errStVar'
          theState = 'ERROR:' errStVar
          deviceId = ''
        END
      ELSE
        DO
          isOpen = .true
          theState = 'READY:'
          deviceId = mciRxGetDeviceID(alias)
        END
      RETURN theState

/*-------------------------------------------------------
 * Close the multimedia file
 */
::method close
  EXPOSE isOpen theState alias
  IF isOpen THEN
    DO
      CALL mciRxSendString "close" alias "wait", 'retSt', ,
                      0, 0
      isOpen = .false
      theState = 'NOTREADY'
    END

/*-------------------------------------------------------
 * Return the state of the multimedia file. ("NOTREADY",
 * "READY:", "ERROR:", etc)
 */
::method state
  EXPOSE theState
  RETURN theState

/*-------------------------------------------------------
 * Play the multimedia file
 *
 * If the file hasn't been opened yet, play automatically
 * calls open.
 */
::method play
  EXPOSE isOpen theState alias
  IF \ isOpen THEN
    self~open
  IF theState <> 'READY:' THEN
    RETURN
  CALL mciRxSendString "seek" alias "to start wait", ,
                      'retSt', 0, 0
  CALL mciRxSendString "play" alias "wait", 'retSt', 0, 0
```

WarpTech registration

Sign up now to get the "early bird" discount rates

The Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc is creating a special three-day technical event for OS/2 Warp users, developers, and vendors. The event will be held at the world-renowned Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park, Arizona, USA (near Phoenix) over Memorial Day weekend.

Technical sessions are planned to cover the gamut from home to corporate users and from novices to software developers. Among the sessions you can expect:

- Software development
- The Internet and e-business with OS/2
- The guts of OS/2
- Connectivity and cross-platform issues
- The OS/2 marketplace
- Tips and tricks

And more!

If you're an OS/2 user, developer, or vendor, this is an event you do not want to miss! To sign up, cut out or copy the form below, fill it in, and mail it to the Phoenix OS/2 Society with your check or credit card information.

The Wigwam Resort is offering a discount room rate of $99/night for WarpTech attendees. To reserve your room at this rate, call 800-327-0396 and mention WarpTech.

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What's the big deal about Net.Commerce?

by Esther Schindler

An ever-increasing number of companies are moving their businesses to the Web. To do so effectively, they need tools to help them establish online catalogs, interact with existing databases, manage credit card merchant payments, and so on.

One of IBM's most successful products, in recent years, is Net.Commerce. While it's touted mainly for Windows NT, AS/400, and larger system, we've had it whispered to us that an OS/2 version does exist... somewhere, if you can find it, when the moon is in the right phase and you slide a coded message under the door of the right IBMer.

At the general meeting on Tuesday, January 11, we'll learn a little more about this major software suite—with the able assistance of a local Phoenix OS/2 Society member, Gil Day.

e-shop until you drop

Just what does the software do? IBM Net.Commerce enables businesses to quickly, easily, and securely conduct electronic commerce on the World Wide Web. It helps companies integrate existing business process and legacy systems with the Web, as well as grow new Web-based businesses. Net.Commerce is scalable, open to customization and integration, and can handle any level of transaction volume. It comes complete with catalog templates, setup wizards, and advanced catalog tools to help you easily build effective and attractive electronic commerce sites.

Net.Commerce is available in several versions, from a "getting started" package complete with hardware (though not for OS/2) to a Pro version, an IBM MQ Series version, and so on. For greater flexibility, you can plug in additional modules, such as a Product Advisor (enabling the supplier/seller to create intelligent catalog searches) to IBM Catalog Architect to IBM Commerce Integrator (an open architecture solution that integrates Net.Commerce with ERP and business application systems).
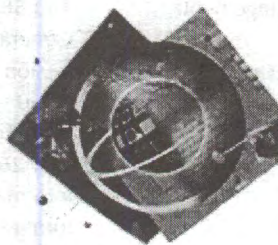
what
▶ IBM's Net.Commerce

where
▶ Camel Square
  44th Street & Camelback
  Phoenix, Arizona

when
▶ Tuesday, January 11, 2000
▶ 6:30pm: Q&A session
▶ 7:00pm: Regular meeting

One of the Phoenix OS/2 Society's longtime and best-beloved members, Gil Day, has been working with Net.Commerce almost since its inception. (He's been working with POSSI since its inception, too, as he started out in 1992 as our liaison to the local IBM office.) Gil will give us a short presentation explaining how Net.Commerce works and will, perhaps, give a technical demo for those who are interested in learning more. Perhaps, by then, we can find out who's really responsible for the rumored OS/2 version of Net.Commerce.

Won't you join us? The Q&A session will begin at 6:30pm, and the meeting will get underway at 7:00pm. You'll find us at our now-usual meeting place, room G250 at CamelSquare. That's at the northwest corner of 44 Street and Camelback. 🐭

Coming events

A list of events scheduled by the Phoenix OS/2 Society and other OS/2 user groups.

January 2000

4 net.sig (Internet SIG). No meeting this month.

5 Magazine submission deadline for February issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

11 General meeting; Net.commerce. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

22 Board meeting and magazine prep. Meeting is 10:00am to 1:00pm. Eat a brunch, learn about the inner workings of the Society, and help get extended attributes ready to mail. Location: Bill and Esther Schindler's house in north Scottsdale, 9355 E Mark Lane. Call 480-585-5852 or send email to esther@bitranch.com for directions.

February 2000

1 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29				

5 Magazine submission deadline for March issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

8 General meeting; Lexmark. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

26 Board meeting and magazine prep.

March 2000

5 Magazine submission deadline for April issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

7 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

14 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

25 Board meeting and magazine prep.

April 2000

4 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

5 Magazine submission deadline for May issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

11 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

22 Board meeting and magazine prep.

May 2000

2 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

5 Magazine submission deadline for May issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

9 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

26 WarpTech begins. The WarpTech conference runs May 26–28, 2000 (Memorial Day weekend). For more information, see www.warptech.org and the application form on page 10.

27 Board meeting and magazine prep.

Meeting locations

Directions to meeting locations.

General meetings are held at the Camel Square office complex, Room G250, 44th Street and Camelback (northwest corner), Phoenix.

From the Red Mountain Freeway (202), exit at 44th Street and go north $3^1/_2$ miles. From the Squaw Peak (51), exit at Colter (southbound) or Highland (northbound); follow signs to Camelback Rd and go east $3^1/_2$ miles.

The "How OS/2 Works General Interest Group" and the Internet SIG (net.sig) meet at Knowledge Development Center, 2999 N 44th St, Suite 400. That's just north of Thomas, in the building with the green dome. Plenty of free parking is available in the garage behind the building. ☺

A map of Camel Square, the new location for the Society's monthly general meeting. We will be meeting in room G250. You may park anywhere except in the reserved (covered) parking spaces.
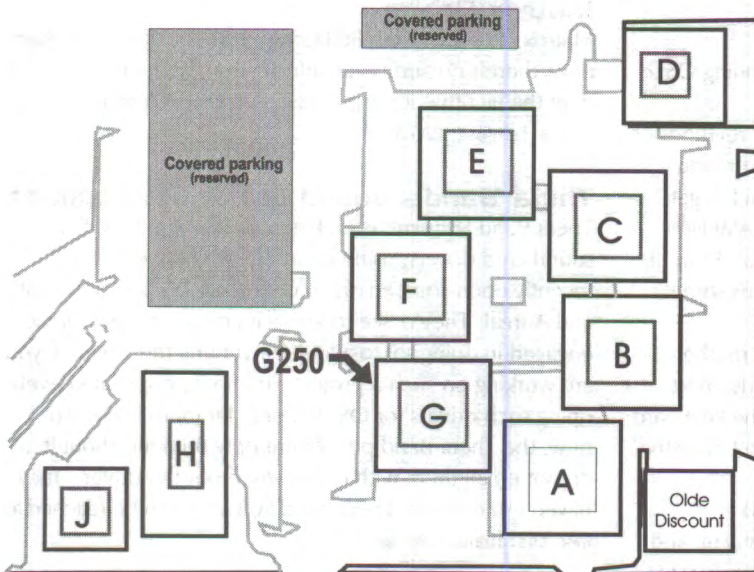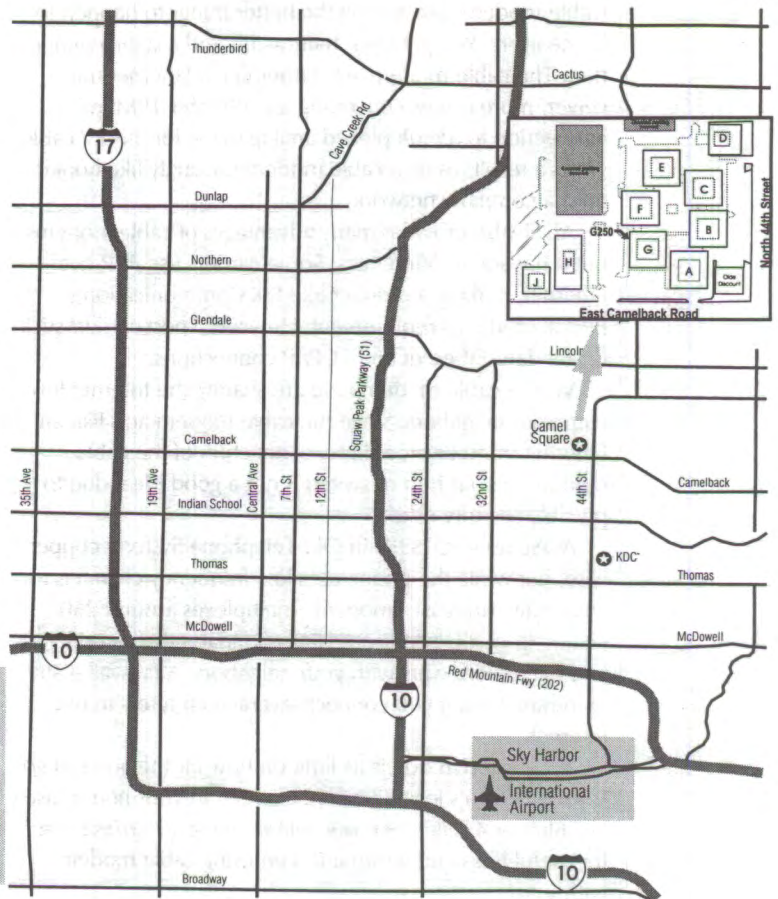
East Camelback Road

North 44th Street

In the driver seat

New support for your OS/2 hardware

by David Wei, davidwei@cybermail.net

Cable modems are among the better things to happen to home users. You get huge bandwidth and a static connection. The cable modem acts rather like a Ethernet transceiver, more or less converting the Ethernet 10Mbps connection to a multiplexed analog signal for the TV cable.

As a result, using a cable modem is exactly like hooking onto a company network.

ADSL also provides many advantages of cable modems, but it has some differences. Some carriers use PPP-over-Ethernet, making a product like F/X Communication's PPPoE product a requirement. However, most carriers stick to standard Ethernet and TCP/IP connections.

With a cable modem, you are sharing the Internet link with your neighbors. Since the cable modem acts like an Ethernet transceiver, a direct connection of the cable modem to your hub or switch is not a good idea, due to possible security risks.

ADSL uses POTS (Plain Old Telephone System) copper wire, but while the phone uses low frequency channels for voice calls, an ADSL "modem" multiplexes around 250 channels. ADSL's dedicated link eliminates the security risk and bandwidth wars with your neighbors. A firewall is still recommended if you connect several computers to the Internet.

ADSL's down side is its limit on how far the line can go from the telco's local fiber-optic switch to your house, usually 6km or 4 miles. See www.cablemodemhelp.com/os2.htm for useful links and information on using cable modems with OS/2.

Athlon Motherboard BIOS

Some people have reported problems with running OS/2 and Athlon chips.

The problem seems to be caused by newer revisions of AWARD BIOS, so PII/Celeron/P* users are not immune. Daniela Engert wrote a patch to the OS/2 kernel to get around the problem. The Athlon system using AMI BIOS doesn't have the problem, as I tested with Asus's K7M. Its stability under OS/2 is excellent, though it needs some slight heatsink modifications.

Also, I discovered a strange problem: Asus' motherboard seems incompatible with some keyboards, most notably IBM's original PS/2 keyboard. When the keyboard is plugged in, POST code shows that the CPU isn't detected! That drove me crazy for a couple days.

Daniela Engert's file is available at ftp://hob-bes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/system/patches/patchldr.zip, and the photograph of the modified heatsink is at www.heatsink

-guide.com/vek32k7m.htm.

CDRecord/2

CDRecord/2 is a free CD recording program for OS/2. The newest version has numerous fixes, plus a CD copying package. Among the fixes is a FIFO that was accidentally disabled by a typo. (Don't laugh, I've done something like this before.) Visit the home page at www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Sector/5785/cdrecord/cdrecordmain.htm.

IBMATAPI.FLT Replacement

Daniela Engert updated her IBM ATAPI Filter Driver replacement. Not only does it support everything IBMATAPI does, but it also supports ZIP-250. It can be downloaded from ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/system/drivers/storage/daniadsk.zip.

SciTech Software's SDD/2

SciTech Software released Beta 11 of its one-for-all video card driver. SDD/2 Beta11 can be downloaded from ftp://ftp.scitechsoft.com/sdd/beta/os2/sdd-os2-7.0.0-b11.exe.

Sound Blaster Install

SB Install 1.2 contains most of the drivers for Creative Lab's ISA based sound cards. It also has other supporting software and utilities. See www.quasarbbs.com/daniel.

Matrox Driver

Matrox released its Unified Driver 2.36.106 for OS/2. Right now, there's no additional information on the driver, other than the fact that it is new. Visit www.matrox.com/mga/drivers/files/os2_236.htm.

Theta Band's sound driver development

Theta Band Software is looking into developing OS/2 sound card drivers, using information obtained from recently open-sourced driver code from both Creative Labs and Aureal. They'd like to know if any people are already engaged in doing so, to avoid reinventing the wheel. If you are working on such a project, or know people are developing such drivers for OS/2, please let them know. For now, the Theta Band people are only thinking about it, so do not email them with questions about the driver—they haven't started yet! Theta Band Software can be reached at www.thetaband.com.

Faxes—for free!

by Irene M. Kraus

When it comes to your money, a home fax machine is just like a shredder!

Think about all the checks you're writing—the basic phone-line costs, long-distance fees. Not to mention the cost of the fax machine itself, plus consumables like ink and paper.

There's just got to be a better way. And there is: Internet-based fax services, all of which are competing for your eyeballs—and in exchange, are willing to provide you with a valuable function for free.

Although several such services are available, I reviewed the services provided by eFax, Telebot, Get Message, and The Phone Company. Three represent a reasonable range of options of the choices we have available for receiving faxes. The fourth is strictly a free fax sending service.

You'll find the details in the accompanying chart.

One reason I chose these four companies was that each of these firms had a clearly posted Privacy Policy. They all promised not to sell or make public my email address, nor would they look at messages I had received.

Send a fax—for free?

eFax is the only service offering both fax send and receive functions; but you'll pay for the privilege of sending faxes. The Phone Company's remote printing service (fax send) is free; it has no fax reception however. They have 'cells' which provide this service in many locations, including some foreign countries. You use it simply by sending your message from their Web site or via an email message. It appears you can only send plain text files through this service.

If you send faxes only occasionally, you may be happy to get by using the fax software included with your operating system or modem. Others will find dedicated software more useful. Nearly every modern modem can send and receive faxes, when used with the proper software. Plus, a fax sent from a computer can be far superior in appearance to one sent from a fax machine. No rollers to slip, no wrinkles in the paper, and no dust to mar the image!

Getting faxes online

When you receive a fax using one of these services, the fax is converted to a picture of what the fax originally looked like. The image is in black and white, so the images take up very little room. Every service I evaluated had a way for you to obtain the fax as a TIFF file, which is a common graphic image standard—and makes it even easier to use these services with the operating system of your choice.

Beyond the image standards, every service was different! Services free from one company are part of a paid package on another. The biggest differences are in the method used to notify you that you've received a fax, and in how you view the fax. For example, Telebot can notify you by pager, ICQ, and even some cell phones when you receive a new message.

With both eFax and Telebot, the fax image is forwarded to your email address as a file attachment. eFax, however, sends it in their own graphic format if you are using either Windows or Mac platforms. You need to use their free viewer program to see it and save it to a TIFF file. Telebot transmits it as a TIFF image, so you can use any graphic program. Other companies, like Get Message, require you to view the fax on their Web site. All of the services allow you to forward the fax to someone else.

How is it free?

These services are free because they include advertising. The ads don't interfere with your ability to read or use the fax image. Just like the banner ads you see on Web pages, you're not obligated to take action. (Of course, if you do see an ad that interests you, it's easy to follow through by clicking on it.)

However, those ads may make some of the services undesirable for businesses. For example, The Phone Company will always include their own cover page that includes advertising with every fax you send through them. Although this may be fine for personal use, this is not the way to project a professional image!

Easy to use?

Part of what I did to evaluate these fax reception services was to send each of them a fax using a dedicated program on my computer to experience these services from the sender's viewpoint. It took me a very long time to come up with the appropriate settings to use in the address book entry before I could get Telebot to work. (Hint: after the phone number, include several commas and then the extension. This forced WinFax to wait a short period before dialing the extension.) It uses my ICQ number as my 'extension' number for when people send me a message. When sending a fax, the sender is expected to enter your extension before it will begin reception. Telebot's system doesn't give you very long to punch in that 8 digit extension number before it hangs up on you!

Get Message also requires you to enter an extension number prior to leaving a message, but gives you much more time to enter information. Beyond the extension,

however, is a menu structure callers must use to indicate if they are sending a fax or voice message. I attempted to create a workable address book entry much like I did for Telebot. The number of characters I would have needed to do so is apparently beyond the capability of my program. So, I was unable to connect to Get Message's system.

eFax was the only service that didn't require me to use extensions or menus. This service is a breeze to connect with either my computer or regular fax machine. Further, you can choose from local or even toll free numbers as part of an "upgrade" package.

Which did I choose?

I didn't want a service that required me to visit a Web site just to find out if I had new faxes. That may be convenient for someone who travels a great deal and appreciates a central location on the Web, but Get Message doesn't work for me. Nor would I use The Phone Company's fax sending service. Moreover, the awkward message reception interface of both Telebot and Get Message could easily frustrate someone sending me a fax from their computer.

My choice for fax reception is eFax. It is the only service that did not limit me in the quantity of faxes received, or in the number of pages it could contain. A service that had restrictions in those areas could become too restrictive in the future. Also, eFax's Plus package which starts at $2.95 per month is far cheaper than adding an additional phone line.

All of these services are very new. I found the types of services offered and the cost for "upgrading" to the paid package changed often. Making predictions about what will be happening with any of these services in a year would be impossible. Check their Web sites before you sign up with anything! ◑

Irene Kraus is the owner of Design COMP in Sandusky, Ohio, where she works as a graphic designer and Internet marketing consultant. You can reach her at ikraus@accsandusky.com.
This article was first printed both in The CEBUG Swatter, January 2000, and in extended attributes.

Table 1. Free Internet Fax Services Comparison Chart

	www.efax.com	www.telebot.com	mgw04.getmessage.com	www.tpc.int
Company Web URL	www.efax.com	www.telebot.com	mgw04.getmessage.com	www.tpc.int
Free services offered	fax reception, voice mail	fax reception, voice mail, email	fax reception, voice mail, email	fax send
Per-page charges or limit	n/a	100 free pages/month	limit of 5 pages/fax	see footnote[2]
Fax Reception	free	free	free	n/a
Fax Send	included in eFax Plus package[3], additional $0.05 for every 30 seconds of send within US	n/a	n/a	free from email message
Notification of fax reception	email file attachment	email file attachment, pager[1], ICQ	visit Web site for free notice	n/a
Viewer type (browser or stand-alone program)	Stand-alone program for Mac & Windows. Converted to TIFF for others.	n/a	browser	n/a
OS support for stand-alone programs	Mac, Win95, Win NT	n/a	n/a	n/a
Possible to forward message thru email	yes	yes	yes	n/a
Fax image can be converted or saved to	TIFF	TIFF	GIF or TIFF	n/a
OCR tools	included in eFax Plus package[3]	n/a	n/a	n/a
Voice Mail Service	yes	yes	yes	n/a
Voice message limit	30 seconds	20 seconds, up to 60 free/month	60 seconds	n/a
Sound format for messages	EFX (need standalone program)	WAV	WAV	n/a
Notification of message by	email file attachment	email file attachment, pager[1], ICQ		free, must visit Web site
Number for fax reception is toll free (TF), regular number (RN), or local (L)	RN for free; either L or TF as part of eFax Plus package[3].	RN	see footnote[2]	n/a
Number for voice mail is toll free (TF), regular number (RN), or local (L)	RN for free, eFax Plus package[3] includes choice of L or TF.	TF	see footnote[2]	n/a

1 Pager services include PCS & GSM phones, and pagers with email address capability

2 An attempt was made to obtain this information for the purposes of this comparison, but I did not get a response.

3 The eFax Plus Package cost is $2.95/month and billed quarterly. A $10 activation fee includes a $5 credit toward fax sends. Option to add additional number available for additional charges.

Kid Stuff and Kid Stuff Plus Pak 1

by Nicholas Ameiss (age 4) and Benjamin Ameiss (age 6), with help from David Ameiss (age unspecified)

Few games are available for OS/2. In particular, the number of educational games is virtually zero. And kid's titles? None. Until now. Aviar to the rescue!

With the release of Kid Stuff and Kid Stuff Plus Pak 1, Aviar shows the world that high-quality, entertaining and educational games can be written for OS/2. At last, parents have a choice: their children can use the computer, learn and have fun—without rebooting several times in the process.

Kid Stuff is a suite of standalone educational games. The readme file describes the intended use of these games: a parent and child, working together through the game.

Start 'er up

Kid Stuff (and the follow-on package, Kid Stuff Plus Pak 1) require OS/2 Warp 4. Object REXX needs to be your default REXX system. The package, written using Object REXX and VisPro REXX, also requires 25MB of storage on an HPFS drive. Kid Stuff makes extensive use of OS/2's multimedia features, so a sound card and a decent set of speakers is a must.

Kid Stuff includes nine games. In Warpo the Clown, the object is to make Warpo smile or frown by choosing the correct word. Colors and Shapes, I Can Add, I Can Subtract, and I Know My Numbers focus on counting and number recognition. My Orchestra and My Music Maker teach the child about music and musical instruments. Finally, The Big Umbrella and The Mystery Garden are interactive stories.

Kid Stuff Plus Pak adds four additional games. In What Am I, the child must identify an object by typing in its name. I'm Different will remind you of "One of these things is not like the other" from Sesame Street. Connect The Numbers is a dot-to-dot drawing program, and I Can Draw provides a basic drawing program.

Kid Stuff
$34.95
Kid Stuff Plus Pak 1
$15.00
Aviar, Inc
www.oops-web.com

Attention to detail

Two things really impressed me. The first is the attention paid to the design and intended goal of each program. Read the readmes: not only do they include instructions for installation and how to play each game, but the particular emphasis for each game is also described. For example, Colors and Shapes "Teaches reading, spelling, and pronunciation. [It] also teaches mouse manipulation." A lot of thought (and experience with young children) went into the design of these programs.

The second thing that impressed me was the amount of customization possible. A Preferences program lets you set various parameters for the games, such as the child's name (children *really* like to see their names), parent's (or other adult) names, Smile and Frown words for Warpo, and the highest number to use for the number programs.

In addition, many of the image and sound files can be replaced. You can record various snippets for The Mystery Garden, and have your voice read some of the lines to your child! Scan in a snapshot of the child, and it can appear at the end of The Big Umbrella. All of this is included in the readme files—so do read them.

What if you have more than one child? Since Kid Stuff doesn't require any environment or CONFIG.SYS changes (other than Object REXX), you can install multiple copies into different directories, and customize each one for each child.

Quibble time

I encountered three problems, none major. First, on one laptop, an old P120 DFI machine, the sounds wouldn't play. I have no idea why, since all other OS/2 sounds play just fine. When I installed the program on my IBM Thinkpad, everything worked fine.

Second, I think the age range of 3–7 years may be a little optimistic. Some games are more advanced than others, but Benjamin (age 6) found no challenge in the number games. On the other hand, Benjamin is a rather remarkable child! He still enjoyed playing all of the games, though.

Third, there seems to be little coordination between the program and the sounds. Once a sound is started, it continues until it has played to the end—even if an action occurs which would cause a different sound to be played. Once
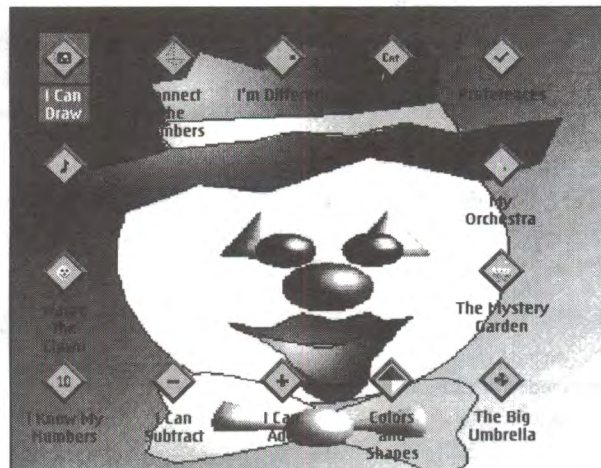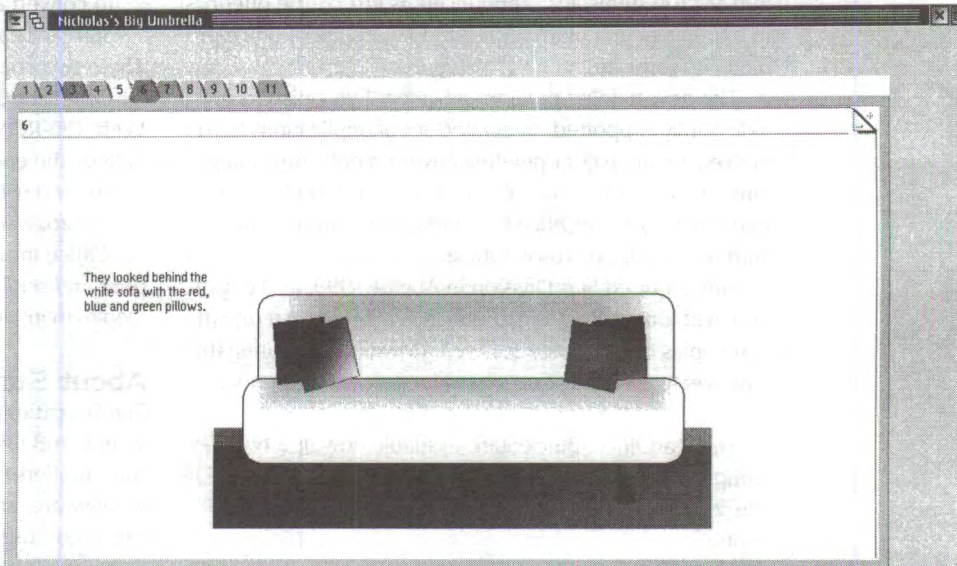
the first sound completes, the second begins. I'd expect the first sound to be pre-empted by another sound, but instead sounds appear to be queued up. I know this can be done, since other OS/2 applications allow it. This is not really a serious problem, but it can lead to some frustration on the part of the child (and parent) when an action does not produce the expected result right away.

All in all, John Urbaniak and Gwen Venesky have done a marvelous job in bringing a set of quality educational and entertaining games to our favorite platform. If you have young children around, this should be on your computer. If you don't have young ones around, the program is worth the price just to see a kinder, gentler side of John! ☻

Nicholas's Big Umbrella

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

6

They looked behind the white sofa with the red, blue and green pillows.

Training for StarOffice 5.I Suite

Sun Microsystems, Inc. announced its first course offerings in a training curriculum for its StarOffice suite of office productivity software.

The new training program advances Sun's plan to provide a fully supported, integrated set of applications to run natively on all major operating environments. Beginning January 30, 2000, Sun will offer two Web-based courses free of charge: StarOffice Overview and Transition to StarOffice from Microsoft Office.

Sun acquired Star Division in August 1999, and began free Web distribution of StarOffice 5.1. More than one million copies of StarOffice 5.1 were downloaded during the nine weeks following Sun's introduction of the product line.

The StarOffice Quick Start, available now, is a two-day comprehensive lecture lab covering an overview of StarOffice software and the StarOffice Writer and Calc components.

The new courses Sun will introduce are:

- StarOffice Overview: a four-hour self-paced course that will get users started to effectively use the StarOffice software productivity suite; and
- Transition to StarOffice from MS Office: teaches users to convert and transfer files from MS Office software to StarOffice software.

These two courses will also be available on CD-ROM.

Other StarOffice 5.1 software courses accessible via the Web, CD-ROM, and instructor-led training will be available by the end of February 2000.

For end users, these will include StarOffice Writer (word processing), StarOffice Calc (spreadsheets), and StarOffice Impress/StarOffice Draw (presentations). Enterprise and service provider courses will include StarOffice Deployment and Help Desk Training.

About Sun Educational Services

Sun Educational Services trains over 100,000 students each year at 168 training centers located in more than 50 countries. It offers education consulting services and courseware, addressing customer demand in IT management, end user, system administration and management, Internet/intranet, security, Java technology programming, and hardware maintenance.

Sun Educational Services offers a complete catalog of training. The Sun Educational Services Web site is at www.sun.com/service/suned for prices and availability. ◔

OpenMerchant e-commerce source code

OpenSales, Inc. announced the free availability of the source code to its OpenMerchant online retailing solution. In keeping with the successful open source model of rapid development, OpenSales will encourage developers, Internet service providers, and system integrators to use and modify the code—and return their modifications to the company's development portal, www.opensales.org.

To ensure developers that OpenMerchant can be shared and modified without becoming a proprietary and closed system, the software has been licensed under the terms of the GNU Public License (GPL). According to Rob Ferber, Chief Technical Officer of OpenSales and founding technologist of the highly successful eToys portal, releasing OpenMerchant under this licensing arrangement will have a tremendous impact upon both businesses and the development community.

The free retailing catalyst, which can be deployed on Linux, Solaris, UNIX, and Windows NT platforms to work with any major database, is designed to process thousands of Web transactions per second on inexpensive clusters of systems. While the company says that the code should work on other platforms it hasn't been tested with OS/2.

OpenSales also offers a wide range of support and complementary services for OpenMerchant. The company's services include system clustering, database management, and the company's Jump-To technology that tracks customer product interest as well as purchasing patterns.

About OpenSales

OpenSales is an idealab! company and is based in San Mateo, California. For more information, please visit www.opensales.com or www.opensales.org. ◔

New and improved

compiled by Esther Schindler

It's a mixed bag, this month, but it's a relatively large bag. There's the predictable utilities, a few commercial updates, and a free release of a once-commercial OS/2 application. This list should give you a few hours of downloading pleasure.

Weasel

Weasel 0.9 is a mail server supporting the POP3 and SMTP protocols.

An email server is incomplete without some sort of junk mail filter. Weasel allows you to reject mail from a specified list of hosts, and it lets you specify which hosts may relay mail via your machine. Weasel also lets you define your own filters. For example, you could write a REXX script that rejects mail containing certain keywords.

Username aliases are supported, and you can create an alias that will expand out to a mixture of local and non-local addresses.

To configure the server, you have a choice between a traditional text-based Setup program or a PM-based one. You can also perform configuration remotely.

The package includes some migration utilities, including a program to fetch mail from another POP server and store it in Weasel mailboxes.

Version 0.9 has a variety of new features to make configuration a little easier. The system for controlling which mail may be relayed is more flexible, with better wildcard matching and the ability to specify things like a range of IP addresses. Logging now has an option for separate POP and SMTP logs.

Outgoing mail is now deferred until a file named "online" exists, to allow for servers that have only an intermittent connection to the Internet.

Weasel costs $20, and is available at `http://eepjm .newcastle.edu.au/os2`.

Lotus SmartSuite

Lotus announced Lotus SmartSuite Release 1.5 for OS/2 Warp. The English version is available immediately from Lotus software resellers. Other language versions will be introduced in the near future.

This new version includes several new Web enhancements, improved Microsoft Office filters, and support for larger spreadsheets.

For more information see `www.lotus.com/smartsuiteos2`.

Back Again/2000

CDS Inc.'s Back Again/2000 is a completely new backup and recovery application for IBM's OS/2 Warp and Warp Server operating systems. In addition, existing Back Again/2 Personal, Professional, and Enterprise customers are entitled to a limited time upgrade price of $49.00 for Back Again/2000 Workstation and $99.00 for Back Again/2000 Server.

Back Again/2000 has many new features and capabilities not found in any other OS/2 backup utility.

Backup and Restore HotStarts. HotStarts provide a "wizard" approach to backup and restore operations and guide you through a backup or restore operation one step at time.

Entirely new media library system. The new media library system records the location of backed up data quickly and efficiently, and is fully searchable. Its compressed format means that the database files require only one-third as much storage space as Back Again/2 Professional v4.x.

BAIIREXX. The Back Again/2000 REXX function library extends REXX with a number of media handling functions, allowing a script to easily initialize or query the contents of a tape.

CLTAPE, a command line tape tool. CLTAPE provides media management functions which can be issued directly from a command prompt or called by a batch file or other application.

Disaster Recovery HotStart. The Disaster Recovery HotStart is an all new tool specifically designed for the disaster recovery process. Instead of using the command line restore tool as in the past, the Disaster Recovery HotStart focuses on making the disaster recovery process as painless as possible.

New backup scheduler. The new backup scheduler daemon allows backup operations to be run without requiring Back Again/2000 to be running.

All new tape driver subsystem. Back Again/2000 is not dependent on OS2SCSI.DMD as is Back Again/2; instead, it communicates directly with the SCSI or IDE driver.

New tape format. Back Again/2000 uses the Microsoft Tape Format, which is compatible with a wide range of other backup applications including Back Again II on Windows 95/98/NT as well as the Windows NT backup applet.

Access Control List (ACL) backup and restore. Back Again/2000 Server is the first commercial backup application that can backup and restore individual ACLs on a file by file (or directory) basis. No more "All or nothing" ACL restores or shelling out and running aclback/aclrest.

Autoloader Support Module. Back Again/2000 Server supports the most popular tape autoloaders and libraries with an optional Autoloader Support Module. Administra-

tors will appreciate its flexible tape handling features and automated cleaning.

You order on CDS' secure commerce server at www.cds-inc.com, or contact the company at 800-284-4156. International customers may call 651-730-4156 or fax 651-730-4156. CDS stands behind its products with a 30-day money back guarantee.

Desktop Clock

Desktop Clock 0.90 is a free, configurable clock for your desktop. You can configure date and time display, and add your message to display with date and/or time.

Desktop Clock becomes the bottom window behind all other windows on your Desktop.

To download the program, visit http://Goran_Ivankovic.tripod.com.

MySQL/2

A new version of MySQL/2, an OS/2 version of the popular open source SQL database, is available. This version of MySQL is based on the 3.22.26a sources.

The full binary, including an install suite, is mysql2-3.22.26a.zip. Or you can download the client-only binaries in mysql-client-3.22.26a.zip. The client-only binaries can be used with earlier releases of the MySQL server.

The files are available from Hobbes (http://hobbes.nmsu.edu) but may be available from the mySQL homepage.

These binaries are not fully stable, proven, or tested. There appears to be an intermittent file locking problem on OS/2 Warp Server for eBusiness SMP, so use it with caution. Otherwise, there is little new code, so this should work much like the previous version without some of the annoying bugs. According to the porting programmer, the full "native" compile may be impractical. WC10.6 cannot sensibly handle 64bit ints, WC11 is MIA, and, he says, "I don't have enough time." You can contact him at antony@curtis.tele2.co.uk.

True Basic

True Basic Inc. recently released version 5.3 of its True Basic programming language. A demo version of the Bronze edition ($39.95) can be downloaded from the developers' Web site.

The Silver version (developers edition) and the Gold (cross platform "professional" version) were also updated. Among the new functions is TruAPPS, a platform for running TB programs on the Web.

More information is on the True Basic Inc. home page www.truebasic.com.

Cable modem logon

Henrik Aaen (haa@mail1.stofanet.dk) released a free OS/2 utility to automatically logon or logoff to the Internet via cable modem. You can download it from http://home1.stofanet.dk/haa.

Free e-commerce package

FreeTrade is an Open Source project for an e-commerce system. It appears to run in PHP and MySQL, so there's no apparent reason that it won't work on OS/2.

You can read more about it at www.working-dogs.com/freetrade.

Analog/2

Stephen Turner and Ivan Martinez have released Analog/2 ver 4.0, a Web Server log analyzer.

New features include enhanced reporting (from operating system usage to processing time), an improved browser summary, and a rewritten form interface. You can find the program at www.statslab.cam.ac.uk/~sret1.

Larsen Commander

Larsen Commander 1.0 is a GUI File Manager and Command Processor that has the look and feel of the classic Norton Commander. The most notable difference is that the Larsen Commander is pure GUI. Still, it has a built in command line and a scrollable console monitor.

You can download it and find more information at http://home.sol.no/~leilarse/lcmd/index.html.

UniMaint upgrade

If you have UniMaint version 5.1 installed on a FAT partition and OS/2 installed on a HPFS partition, you are probably not getting a good backup of your Desktop directory structure when you do a Desktop backup.

Starting with version 5.1, Zip v2.2 is used to perform the backup where previously Zip v2.1 was used. Based on preliminary investigation, it appears that a change in Zip v2.2 to accomodate spaces in directory paths (which the Desktop directory generally has a lot of) results in an error which is displayed but flys by too fast to read or notice. If your SYSBCKXX.ZIP file has a file size of 350-400k and the ZIP.EXE file size is 112,688 bytes, you have the problem. You can also run the ZIP.EXE file and see if it reports v2.2. The immediate solution is to replace the ZIP.EXE file in the UniMaint directory with ZIP.EXE v2.1—or reinstall UniMaint on a HPFS partition. Download the older zip file from www.filestar.com. If necessary, a fix will be released to eliminate the incompatibility.

Astrolog for OS/2

Magnus Olsson (sunlite@visdom.nu) announced a comprehensive astrological calculation program for OS/2. Astrolog for OS/2 0.97b, based on the famous program Astrolog by Walter D. Pullen, has all the astrological calculation features of the Windows version.

You can download the latest version from www.visdom.nu/home/astrolog/astrolog.zip.

Astrolog for OS/2 is an ongoing development project. Updates and more information can be found on the Astrolog for OS/2 home page www.visdom.nu/home/astrolog.

ScanPCI for OS/2

Marco Salvagno (mgs@whiz.cjb.net) released ScanPCI. The ScanPCI utility scans the PCI

buses attached to the system and reports the devices connected. This version sports some new features and updates the device database.

To get a copy, visit http://whiz.cjb.net then follow the Software link.

Crown of Might

After more than two years of development, Uwe aus dem Moore (u.ausdemmoore @ndh.net) announced the first playable demo of Crown of Might for OS/2. Crown of Might is a strategic game like the classic Defender of the Crown.

The Crown of Might demo is available for download from www.admoore.de.

Star Logo

Star Logo is a expanded version of Seymour Papert's turtle-based programming environment Logo. More information on the language can be had from www.media .mit.edu/starlogo.

A beta version of the Star Logo language, written in Java with OS/2 support, is available for download from http://starlogo .www.media.mit.edu/people/starlogo /download/getstar.html.

Shareware author's tool

The Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP) released PADGen 1.0, a free Windows 98/95/NT4 program that makes it easy for software developers to submit their software to Internet download sites. If you're willing to use a Windows program to upload your OS/2 programs, this may be of interest.

Today, software submission forms are burdensome, and each site has its own rules. The ASP's PADGen program lets software authors create a single company-level information record and multiple program-level information records that can be accepted by virtually any Internet software site.

Major Internet software download sites, including MSN, Author-Direct, ZDNet, TUCOWS, and C|Net, are already supporting PADGen or have committed resources to it, and others are expected to adopt the PADGen standard in the coming weeks. From the Internet sites' perspective, they can easily extract the PADGen XML file from within an author's ZIP archive, or they can access the URL of the PADGen XML file on each author's Web site, and automatically access the latest program information.

While PADGen was designed to run on 32-bit Windows platforms, the open PADGen data standard makes it possible for Macintosh, OS/2, UNIX, AS/400, and other software developers to create a PAD-compatible data file.

PADGen information, a free copy of the program, and a family of free PAD-related tools for authors and download site managers are available on the ASP's web site at www.asp-shareware.org/pad. All the PADGen tools are free for authors and vendors.

The Association of Shareware Professionals was formed in April 1987 to strengthen the future of shareware (try-before-you-buy software) as an alternative to the traditional methods of marketing software.

Embellish goes free

The Image editing program Embellish has been released for free (full version). Their Web site says, "Well, boys and girls, we gave it our best shot but it wasn't to be. We had some fun and learned a lot. We also created some damn fine software along the way. Yep, Dadaware is history, the laws of supply and demand have ruled against us. But hey, it doesn't cost us anything to allow you to continue using Embellish. So feel free to grab a copy." You can get the software at www.dadaware.com but the authors request that you don't post it elsewhere.

NetHack

On Dec 10, version 3.3.0 of NetHack, the most elaborate role-playing environment you are ever likely to explore was released.

Well, "elaborate" may be a bit strong, but NetHack is surely a compelling game. NetHack's Web site is at www.nethack.org; the page for the OS/2 version is www.nethack .org/v330/ports/download-os2.html.

Symantec Antivirus

Several new updates have appeared in rapid succession in the past few weeks. The

newest virus signature update file is
AV30BF.ZIP, posted on December 13.
Download it from www.symantec.com/
avcenter/download.html.

To find it, open the "Product" listing,
and click on "IBM AntiVirus Updates." Then
click on "Next" and scroll to the very bottom of the page. You'll find AV30FB.ZIP,
dated 12-13-99.

LEO: new OS/2 files

Ordinarily, I include the descriptions that
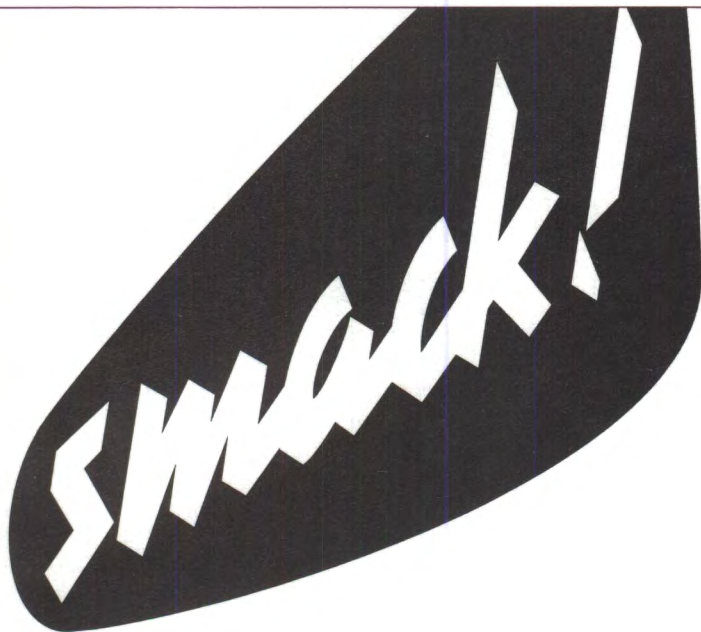find their way into my email box. But every
so often, it's worth pointing out that major
OS/2 sites have a long list of applications
that don't get especial mention. Here's a list
of recent files uploaded to LEO's OS/2
archive, to give you an idea of what's available. You can access the archive using
either a Web browser at www.leo.org/pub/
comp/os/os2 or using an FTP client program
to reach ftp://ftp.leo.org/pub/comp/os/
os2. Both URLs provide access to the same

file collection.

Using the Web front end, you can easily
navigate through the archive, view archive
contents (even view README or FILEID_DIZ
files within zip files) and download files.

See /pub/comp/os/os2/leo/00-files for a
full index of the OS/2 archive and 00-readme
for other information, such as how to
upload files. ☯

Table 1. New files at LEO

File	Description
apps/bochs2.zip	x86/DOS emulator
apps/disci086.zip	Vocabulary training utility
apps/et317.zip	Bank account manager
apps/pmr140.zip	Application for driving the Reveal RA300 FM radio card and the AIMS Labs. RadioTrack card
apps/tbuchos2.zip	German accounting program for small companies
apps/uae2.zip	Amiga emulator
archiver/rarx260.exe	RAR 2.60 archiver
comm/sendsms425.zip	Send SMS messages to mobile phones
database/xdbfj18j.zip	xBase file access for Java
demos/tbos253.zip	True Basic/2 Bronze edition demo Ver.5.3
devtools/java/osaj-os2.zip	OSA Static analyzer for Java Version 1.38 (trial)
devtools/utils/ppwizard.zip	Generic preprocessor
gnu/emx+gcc/rsxnt/cc1plus.zip	Fix for nt09dgpp.zip
gnu/emx+gcc/rsxnt/rsxnt150.zip	RSX/Win32 runtime support and toolkit for emx
graphics/alchemy_os2_1.11.zip	Graphical front end for Image Alchemy
graphics/dcitu18g_beta.zip	Load images from Kodak DCxxx digital cameras
graphics/outjpeg_03.zip	Command line utilities for JPEG file manipulation
mail+news/cs2pmm_m.zip	Convert GCP message files for PMMail/2
pmtools/clock101.zip	Configurable WorldClock and StopWatch
pmtools/smw1002.zip	OS/2 user interface enhancer
pmtools/wnote187.zip	'Yellow stickers' utility for PM
rexx/gpfrx12c.zip	GPF Rexx Visual GUI programming toolkit v.1.2c
rexx/rexx_md5.zip	Compute MD5 digests from Rexx
rexx/rxrsync.zip	RxRsync: REXX callable Rsync procedures
sound/frontend_for_bladeenc_106.zip	Frontend for Bladeenc, an MP3 encoder
sound/lbmix001.zip	A mixer for Crystal Semiconductor IOCTL90 mixer API
sound/mikmod2k-318.zip	MOD player
sound/mp3p_v991101.zip	MP3 front end for lame and leech
sound/pmconv006.zip	MP3 Grabber and Encoder for OS/2 Warp with CDDB
sound/speechlib.zip	Speech library for programmers
systools/bootos2.zip	Make OS/2 boot floppy

smack!

Perfect Niche Software, Inc.
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Email: sales@perfectniche.com
http://www.perfectniche.com

The labeling program for OS/2

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